

# Community Action Network Meeting February 18, 2010

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## **Presentation on Truancy Plus Initiative**

Truancy Plus Working Group

# Agenda

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- Overview - Truancy “Plus”

Dr. Linelle Clark-Brown, AISD

- Community Engagement Process

Dr. Linelle Clark-Brown, AISD

- Priority Recommendations

Stephanie Hayden, City of Austin

- Next Steps

# Texas Dropout and Truancy Definition

- A student who attends Grade 7-12 in a public school in a particular school year, does not return the following fall, is not expelled, and does not:
  - Graduate
  - Receive a GED
  - Continue school outside the public school system
  - Begin college, or
  - Die
- Truancy= any unexcused absence from school as defined by a States attendance laws

# Desired Outcomes

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- ❑ Improve attendance
- ❑ Reduce unexcused absences
- ❑ Re-engage students before they get 10 unexcused absences and a truancy case is filed with courts

# Community Partners Engaged

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## Local Government

- City of Austin
- Travis County

## Education

- Austin Independent School District
- UT Austin Law School

## Criminal Justice System

- Municipal Court
- Truancy Court
- Juvenile Probation / Gardner Betts

## Local Non-Profit Organizations

- Communities in Schools
- Life Works
- The Austin Project
- APIE
- University and School Partnerships Institute for Community
- African American Men and Boys Harvest Foundation, Inc.
- Central Texas Afterschool Network
- Community Education Consortium

## Other

- Ready by 21
- Community Action Network

# Best Practices

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- 1. Utilize data systems** that support a realistic diagnosis of the number of students who drop out and that help identify individual students at high risk of dropping out (diagnostic).
- 2. Assign adult advocates to students** at risk of dropping out (targeted intervention).
- 3. Provide academic support and enrichment** to improve academic performance (targeted intervention).

\* What Works Clearinghouse, US Dept of Education

# Best Practices

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- 4. Implement programs to improve students' classroom behavior and social skills** (targeted intervention).
- 5. Personalize the learning environment and instructional process** (school wide intervention).
- 6. Provide rigorous and relevant instruction** to better engage students in learning and provide the skills needed to graduate and to serve them after they leave school (school wide intervention).

\* What Works Clearinghouse, US Dept of Education

# Recommendations

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## Needs Identification and Intervention

### 1. Start Early

- With parents when children are young
- Proactive identification of children “at risk” for truancy

# Recommendations

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## Needs Identification and Intervention

### 2. Make IMPACT team responsible

- Proactive identification of children “at risk” for truancy (review of attendance data)
- Broaden team to include key partners (law enforcement, court system)
- Provide IMPACT teams with support to become fully functional (training, information on “what works,” Webb as an example)

# Recommendations

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## Needs Identification and Intervention

### 3. Develop individualized plans to address causes

#### Students and families

- Individualized case management/referrals
- Adult advocates

#### School climate issues

- Make schools more user-friendly and student-centered
- Conduct student Gallup poll; use climate survey
- Increase options for vocational and different instructional styles – for students who like hands on, and who have to work due to financial need

# Recommendations

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## Tracking

### 4. Conduct joint analysis of data across systems

- Develop criteria for truancy risk factors
- Joint training across systems
- Review data (AISD attendance and discipline, law enforcement, courts, other at-risk factors) with systems like SASSI- City, County, and AISD
- Track progress on individual students
- Identify patterns or trends to target response

# Recommendations

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## Systems Coordination

### 5. Establish/define a Leadership Council and working partnership group, supported by staff

- Leadership Council has policy and resource authority, commitment
- Partnership group is diverse, inclusive to coordinate efforts
- Paid staff is needed for project management and coordination
- Address not only truancy but other related issues
- Review Systems to Improve Coordination
  - Attendance compliance across agencies, e.g. HACA, Health and Human Services Commission, etc.)

# Recommendations

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## Crosscutting

### **6. Educate the public and engage the community**

- “Let’s Do the Math” campaign
- Community awareness – targeted to employers, students, parents, etc.

# Moving the Needle

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Ongoing engagement of these partners:

- Austin Independent School District
  - City of Austin
  - Travis County
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# Moving the Needle: Community Partners

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- CPS, Foster Care providers/advocates
- Social/Support services (Mental Health Services or CIS) and other social service agencies
- Mentors, tutors, and academic support
- Family Resource Centers
- Faith-based organizations
- Employers
- Neighborhood Associations
- Child/Youth-focused Coalitions
- Higher Education

# Next Steps

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